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BN038A

Argentina

U.S.-ARGENTINA MILITARY RELATIONS JEOPARDIZED
(To be Used Only if raised by GOA)

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Our ability to maintain military relationships with Argentina is diminishing rapidly. FY 1978 military credits have already fallen by the wayside due to human rights; the FY 1977 credits are being held in abeyance for the same reason. The continuance of a \$700,000-grant training program is being criticized as are all military sales, whether FMS cash or commercial. Congress is considering a cutoff of all U.S. arms transfers and training for Argentina: this includes commercial sales and items in the pipeline.

II. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT POSITION

Argentina values its military ties with the U.S. but could get along easily without us.

III. OUR POSITION

Argentina is of relatively marginal military interest to us. Military ties are, however, important to our overall relationship. During the World Wars and Korean War we were anxious to have Argentina on our side because of its enormous food resources which we wanted to deny to our enemies. Argentina is also the logistic base for an important U.S. Antarctic installation, which might have to be closed if we cannot work with the Argentine Navy. We would thereby weaken our claim to part of Antarctica and to the region's resources. Finally, a denial of military assistance would impede our ability to influence the Argentine atomic energy program, Latin America's most advanced.

IV. SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

- The United States values its military ties with Argentina and knows the Argentine Armed forces are anxious to cooperate with ours.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full DECONTROL

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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- The impression must be corrected that the Argentine government is not in full control and must resort to mysterious right wing forces and unexplained disappearances to root out terrorism.

- We strongly urge the acknowledgment of all prisoners under detention, the restoration of due process, and the punishment of all excesses. Perhaps the "right of option" which allows Argentine citizens to leave the country rather than being held without charges might be restored.

- In sum, we are anxious to see the Argentine government reflect the values most Argentines and the Western world share.

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- While we recognize that the Armed Forces did not create the problem they are dealing with, there is no way to explain the current counterterrorist excesses of the armed forces and police to our people and the Congress.

- Unless the situation changes very soon in Argentina, we strongly suspect that Congress will ban all military cooperation with Argentina, including commercial sales.

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